



The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about VILLAGE SIGNS

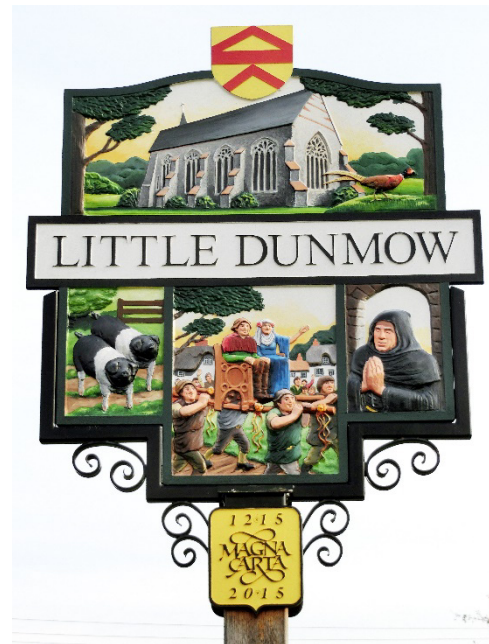


The tradition of village signs is believed to have started around 100 years ago on the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk. The idea has spread and is particularly popular in the Hundred Parishes. Around two-thirds of the parishes have a welcoming sign that usually tells us something about the place and its history.

The installation of a village sign has often been prompted by a significant event or anniversary. The Queen's Silver Jubilee inspired the erection of Stansted Mountfitchet's knight signs at either end of the village in 1977. These may be the oldest in the Hundred Parishes.

Signs are generally made from wood or steel and their designs often show great imagination and artistic skill to depict aspects of life or history that are important to that parish. Several include a plane, recognizing the part played by their local airfield in the Second World War.

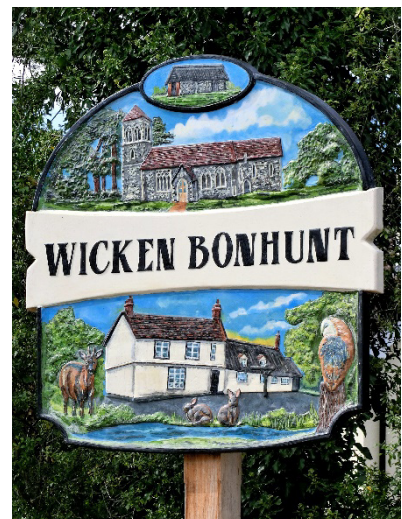
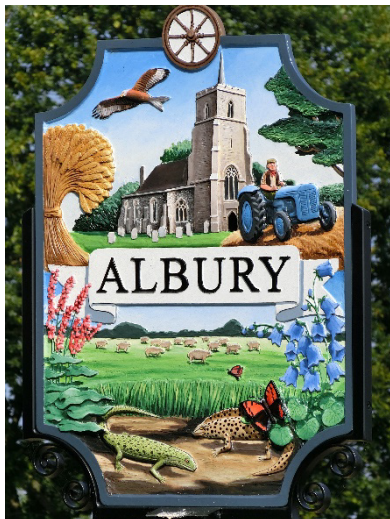
The arrival of the new millennium saw a rush of signs, followed by the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. The 800th anniversary of Magna Carta inspired the installation in Little Dunmow in 2015.



There appears to be no waning in enthusiasm for erecting signs with more recent additions in Albury, Lindsell, Wicken Bonhunt and High Wych, the last installed in 2023.

If this article omits any more-recent signs, please advise the Society using the Feedback form on the website.

Below are photos of the other three new signs mentioned above . . .



Some parishes have more than one sign: for example, Much Hadham has its own plus others in the hamlets of Perry Green and Green Tye.



Some signs, such as Finchingfield, have different images on front and back.



There are some imaginative designs, like the sign at Little Walden, a hamlet within the parish of Saffron Walden.

Most signs are at the entrance to the village or in a prominent place, while a few are somewhat off the beaten track, for example in Broxton.



If you are a photographer or artist, there is much scope for trying to 'capture' these charming works of art. You might like to submit your photos to The Hundred Parishes group on Facebook.

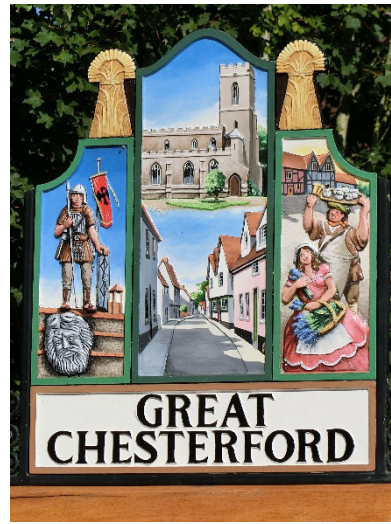
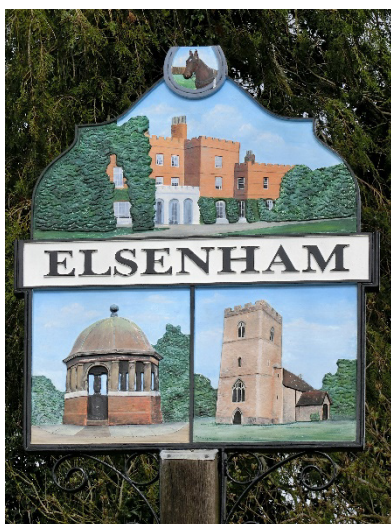
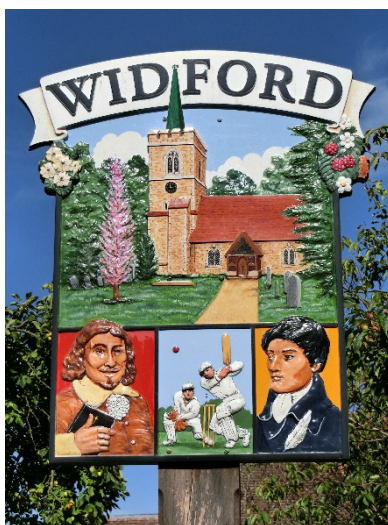
With almost a hundred signs being maintained, or not, photos can sometimes become outdated.

Occasionally, signs disappear from view – does anyone know what happened to the one shown on the right - photographed in 2016 in Weaverhead Lane, Thaxted?



Thaxted still has two signs that can readily be found. One is shown on the left.

We will conclude this article with more examples of variety and imagination.



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Any comments or suggestions for improvement may be submitted by using the Feedback form on the website. The website has many short articles on various aspects of The Hundred Parishes, as well as introductions to individual parishes and to a number of local celebrities, and an extensive What's On section. More than 100 walk route descriptions can be freely downloaded, with each of the hundred parishes featuring in at least one walk.